

SAMUEL S. WOOD AND WILLIAM P. KIRKLAND AND  
OTHERS.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 31.]

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MARCH 30, 1860.—Ordered to be printed.

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Mr. E. JOY MORRIS, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, made the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs, to whom was referred the memoria of Samuel S. Wood and William P. Kirkland, commissioner and solicitor on behalf of certain citizens of the United States, report:*

It appears that the memorialists and other citizens of the United States and other nationalities, engaged in business at Greytown, or San Juan de Nicaragua, organized in March, 1852, a municipal government, subject to the paramount authority of any power which might be decided to hold the government of the country to which Greytown belonged.

During the spring of 1853, a certain building, held by the Nicaragua Accessory Transit Company, at Punta Arenas, adjacent to said town, was removed by corporate order of the authorities of Greytown. Also, during the month of May, 1854, certain effects belonging to said company were alleged to have been feloniously taken away by a servant of said company and conveyed to said town, where it was alleged to have been withheld from said company, by said corporate authorities. And at the same time, and in connexion with this occurrence, two of the employés of said company were arrested upon warrants emanating from said authorities, charged with having resisted a legal process and committing an assault; and were placed under bonds to keep the peace towards said authorities and citizens.

And afterwards, on the 16th day of May of that year, (1854,) a native citizen of the country was killed in the vicinity of said town, as is alleged by a Portuguese, in the employ of said company, whose arrest was attempted in the harbor of said town, upon a warrant of said municipal authorities; but was prevented by the interference of the United States minister, then present, on his way home; and who, it is on the other hand charged, was arrested and rudely assailed by the citizens of said town.

There seems to have been a controversy between the authorities of

Greytown, and the Nicaragua Accessory Transit Company as to whether the company had a right to enter the port of Greytown without paying harbor dues, and to occupy certain lands without the consent of the authorities of Greytown.

Upon these two questions of the right to collect harbor dues, and the right to evade them, and the right to occupy certain lands, and the right to eject, the Transit Company and the municipal authorities seemed to have quarrelled.

The memorialists allege that the agents of the Transit Company wished to overthrow the authorities of Greytown, for two objects: 1st. To relieve the company from port charges. 2d. To secure to certain employes of the company possession and title to lands within the jurisdiction of Greytown, acquired under an imperfect title.

In order to carry out their object, it is alleged that the President of the United States was informed that it was due to the protection of American property there located, and in transit across the territory occupied by them, that Greytown should be destroyed and the inhabitants thereof dispersed.

Accordingly, the President sent the United States sloop-of-war Cyane to the harbor of Greytown, with instructions to demand that immediate indemnity in a large amount should be made to the Nicaragua Transit Company, with prompt apology for the insult offered the United States minister, "and satisfactory assurance" for the future good behavior of said community.

This demand was made, and is alleged not to have been complied with in consequence of the authorities having resigned their authority at and after the time of the interference of the United States minister in the arrest of the man charged with murder; the few hours allowed for compliance are alleged to have been altogether inadequate to the purpose, and insufficient for the inhabitants to remove their effects; whereupon the commander of said vessel proceeded to bombard said town, and consumed by fire the entire destructible property of its inhabitants to the value of one million two hundred thousand dollars.

The memorialists allege that the criminal charges made against said community are untrue, and were fabricated by its enemies for the purpose of deceiving and misleading the United States government; and they charge that the entire course of the naval and civil representatives of the United States government, then at Greytown, was irregular and unwarrantable; and that they are entitled to indemnity for the losses sustained in consequence of said destruction of their property.

Regarding it the duty of a powerful nation to do exact justice to a feeble and unprotected people complaining of injury at its hands, and especially to examine whether citizens of the United States have been injured by their own government acting upon false or insufficient information, the committee recommend the adoption of the accompanying resolutions.